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CHRISTIAN SOCIOLOGY. III.

THE FAMILY.

IF, then, society be the union of those who by nature demand social life, all its various phases will be expressions of this need of union. But this, as we have already seen, does not exhaust the social principles of Jesus. Humanity can be normally social only when it is fraternal. The ideal is not merely a union, but a union of brothers. And what is thus true of society in the aggregate is true also of its various institutions. There too must fraternity be the ideal and the test of normality. This principle is not hard to trace, but in some particulars it has singularly escaped attention. In nothing, however, is it more apparent than in Christ's teaching in regard to the family.

I.

As one might expect *a priori*, the family is regarded by Jesus as one manifestation of the essential social character of men. The sexes complement one another as the two halves of a whole. This finds expression in his well-known use of the words and incidents of Genesis. Marriage has a divine origin. Husband and wife are joined together by God, so that they are no longer two but one. It is noteworthy that Jesus thus regards marriage as monogamous — not indeed as the result of an evolving conventionality, but as the result of the divine creative act.¹ Monogamy is thus regarded by him as the only normal, the only divine basis of family relations. By this reaffirmation of the noble social teaching of Moses,² Jesus sets his disapproval upon all forms of plural marriage, whether legal

¹ Matt. 19 : 5, 6; Mark 10 : 6-8. No words reported as those of Jesus are more certainly his than these concerning marriage and divorce.

² It should not be overlooked that in using the expression "twain" Jesus follows the Septuagint rather than the Hebrew, which reads simply "them."

or illegal. In none of his teachings have we greater economy of expression, but in none is his meaning less in doubt.

But it would be an incomplete presentation of the position of Jesus to stop at this point. If we attempt to arrange his thought in any system, the union of two persons in marriage becomes one factor in the union of the race; a union which appears at once natural for mankind, and also a symbol of that divine social order which is to come, when all men are to be sons of God and society thus a brotherhood. It is not the creature of law. Law can simply recognize and protect it. With Jesus marriage on its physical side is an actual union of complementing personalities—a forming of one flesh. It is one of the primal *facts* of human life, and because it is a conditioning fact and not a merely formal conception of the law books, it is especially sacred and inviolable. It is in itself a fraternity—a micro-cosmic kingdom of God.

On its physical side Jesus regards marriage—like the other physical elements in the evolving social order—as an institution to be found only in the present æon. The much-married woman of the Sadducees' riddle,¹ in the life beyond the grave was no longer to be subject to the perplexing levirate law, for in the resurrection humanity neither marries nor is given in marriage, but is to be as the angels of heaven. And yet while Jesus thus recognizes the physical basis of marriage, he never regards it as in any way sinful or ignoble; so far is he removed from the perversions that an ascetic faith has so frequently forced upon humanity. As long as human nature and human relations are as they are, so long will marriage be the first human tie. For it ties otherwise the closest are to be broken. Filial dependence, the family itself are to yield before the marital union and the future family. But the physical is not the only, nor is it the permanent element in marriage. This must be found in the same fraternal spirit which guarantees a perpetuation of the kingdom. Just as this ideal society is independent of physical bounds and changing physical elements, so, we may infer, is the

¹ Matt. 22 : 23; Mark 12 : 18-25; Luke 20 : 27-36.

ultimate basis of the marriage relation to be found in spiritual rather than physical unity. Between man and wife here is to be a union in spirit that springs from a love that is not mere passion, but is volitional and moral. When physical surroundings have passed away, then will the spiritual union, which must have accompanied the physical, survive, and the completed family become even more apparently like the completed society, a psychical union. Until this consummation of human progress comes, therefore, the dominant characteristics of the growing kingdom are to be exhibited in this its typical and initial unity.

Thus here, as in other social relations, the spiritual union must supplement and ennoble the physical. "If trust be incomplete, marriage, we know, cannot have its perfect work. If trust be broken, marriage perishes. But by interchange of thought and hope and prayer in marriage, trust ripens into faith."¹

It is unnecessary for the appreciation of this position of Jesus to follow him in his terminology. It is of little or no consequence whether the basis of this conception of the marriage relation be regarded as a literal divine word or as human nature itself; whether the institution itself be the outcome of a creative *fiat* or of evolution. The one essential point is its absolute truth from the point of view of both ethics and human history. Marriage is indeed a fundamental human relation; it is in its normal condition when monogamous; it is something more than a living together of man and woman; it is a psychical as well as a physical completion of individuals; and as such it is in the largest sense of the term a fraternity that depends for its perpetuation upon love.²

II.

From this point of view Christ's teaching in regard to divorce becomes not only simple but inevitable. So long as marriage is not a mere matter of law, of conventionality, but is one expres-

¹ WESCOTT, *The Social Aspects of Christianity*, p. 25.

² "It is clear that monogamy has long been growing innate in the civilized man. For all the ideas and sentiments now associated with marriage, have, as their implication, the singleness of the union."—SPENCER, *Principles of Sociology*, I., 673.

sion of the fundamental social nature of man in both its physical and spiritual expression; and so long as it is monogamous, to be characterized by the modesty that is possible alone in such a relation; so long must it be unbreakable by statute. Divorce by Jesus is regarded as impossible, except as a formal recognition of an already broken union. As marriage gives rise to an actual union of personalities, it can be broken only by an actual severance of this union. When this is not the case, law can no more annul it than it can annul an arch. "What God has joined together let no man put asunder." In this again Jesus was in contrast with his times. The astonishing laxity which prevailed among the fashionable clique at Rome, even if all due allowance be made for the natural exaggeration of moralists and poets, is well known from the literature of the empire,¹ to say nothing of the early Christian writers.² But the same tendencies were at work among the less corrupt circles of Judea. There, too, the general laxity in regard to divorce was quite as striking. The liberal school of Hillel was here more the offender than that of Shammai. By an exceedingly broad interpretation of Deut. 24:1 (the sole ground for divorce in the Mosaic code), it was judged permissible to divorce a wife if she had spoiled her husband's dinner, and later, if we are to accept the words of R. Akiba, even if the husband discovered a woman more to his liking.³ Jesus was in fact opposed by his countrymen, to whom, thanks to the popular teaching, his doctrine seemed fanaticism. Moses, they objected,⁴ had allowed divorce, had even commanded that a "bill of divorcement" should be given in case of separation.

See also p. 752 where he declares such a marriage to be "manifestly the ultimate form." So WESTERMARCK, *The History of Human Marriage*, p. 510. DRUMMOND, *The Ascent of Man* is here suggestive.

¹ See FRIEDLÄNDER, *Sittengeschichte der Römer*, I., ch. 5; DÖLLINGER, *The Gentile and the Jew*, II., 230 sq.

² See, for instance, Clement of Alexandria and Jerome.

³ But there is here opportunity, as in the case of Juvenal, for a large allowance for rhetoric. Yet the general ease of divorce is undeniable. The Talmud devotes an entire tractate (*Gittin*) to the subject. (See EDERSHEIM, *Life of Jesus the Messiah*, II., 332 sq.; STERN, *Die Frau im Talmud*; WEILL, *La Femme Juive*.)

⁴ Matt. 19:7.

Jesus was not to be shaken from his position by any quotation of ancient authorities. He admitted that Moses had allowed divorce as an expedient, a choice between two evils, but, appealing not to statute but to life, he protested in words his hearers would have regarded as older even than the law of Moses, that such permission was in violation of a primary fact of human society, an undoing of the law of creation, a violation of human nature.

It is a little remarkable, but indicative of the importance Jesus accorded the family, that, not content with thus enunciating a general principle, he should have gone into minuter treatment of this one social relation. His position upon many subjects which are of burning interest today, and, to judge from the writings of the time, were often quite as much so in his own day, is often non-committal, almost always reserved, although occasionally, as in the case of ceremonial uncleanness, he expresses in a pregnant sentence a specific principle. But in the matter of divorce he has left us some of the most explicit legislation the gospels have preserved. Under no circumstances, provided that the marriage union is not actually broken through the unfaithfulness of one of the parties, is a husband to divorce his wife, or a wife her husband.¹ In case there is no such actual breaking of the marriage tie, a husband who puts his wife away, be it never so legally, causes her to be judged as belonging to that class of women who have really given grounds for divorce; he brands her an adulteress.² If, on the basis of such divorce she should marry, both she and the new husband commit sin. The original union is still existent. Yet if adultery has actually been committed, the guilty party may be divorced.³ In such a

¹ This addition is noteworthy. It had not been customary among the Jews for wives to divorce their husbands, but about the time of Jesus we meet several cases of its occurrence among the official class. Thus Salome, sister of Herod I, divorced her husband (JOSEPHUS, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 15:8:10), and later Herodias, at least nominally, divorced her husband Herod, in order to live with his brother, Herod Antipas. But the custom was more Roman than Jewish.

² Matt. 5:32.

³ This view presupposes the exceptive clause in Matt. 5:32 and 19:9. This position is not beyond question, especially since that clause does not appear in Mark

case it would appear as if the two parties became *de facto* unmarried; since their union is broken, both in its physical and its psychical aspects, they are no longer one flesh, nor is theirs a community of love. They are not, therefore, forbidden by Jesus to marry again.¹

But two things are here very evident: (1) Jesus does not command a divorce even in the most extreme cases. His recognition of the possibility of such a course of action is, so to speak, parenthetic. The ideal of brotherhood and the need of reconciliation would certainly favor a maintenance of old relations even after divorce is permissible. Forgiveness and reconciliation are as much the supreme needs in the family as at the altar. (2) There is nothing in his teachings that would lead us to believe Jesus disapproved of the separation of a married pair for other causes than the one which would justify divorce. But remarriage on the part of either husband or wife who are thus separated would be regarded by him as a violation of the marriage union that still exists between them.

10: 11, although Meyer may be correct in saying that it is there understood as a matter of course. It is also lacking in Luke 16: 18, but the omission by Luke is not so serious as that by Mark. WENDT (*Teaching of Jesus*, I., 354) judges this omission as sufficient ground for the view that "the simple, unqualified statement 'to put away a wife on the ground of unchastity is not culpable adultery,' does not correspond with the meaning of Jesus." This meaning being "that the obligation of marriage is absolute, and no dissolution of it is possible without incurring the guilt of adultery." And it must be admitted that on critical grounds the addition of the clause by Matthew (so Bleek, Weiss, Holtzmann, and others) is more probable than its omission by Mark. Yet on the grounds stated in the text the exception does not appear foreign to the thought of Jesus. Even were the clause omitted, we should have very possibly a strong rhetorical statement like others of Jesus. (For example, Matt. 5: 29, 30, 34.) And in any case the main thought of Jesus would be unaffected. An interesting commentary upon his position is to be seen in the interpretation put by Jesus upon the status of the much married Samaritan woman, John 4: 18.

¹ See HOVEY, *The Scriptural Law of Divorce*, and *Studies in Ethics and Religion*, p. 321 *sq.*, and commentaries (especially MEYER, and BROADUS) on the above passages. See also STRONG, *Philosophy and Religion*, 431-442, and WOOLSEY, *Divorce and Divorce Legislation*, ch. 2, although so far as his interpretation of the teaching of Jesus on this point is concerned, President Woolsey's views were later reversed. (See the essay by President Strong just mentioned.) The church has not generally favored this interpretation. See SCHMIDT, *Social Results of Christianity*, p. 201 *sq.*, and, especially for the Roman Catholic position, CONVERS, *Marriage and Divorce*.

The ground for this definiteness is not difficult to discover. Marriage, both in its lower and its higher aspects, is the basis of family unity. Family life is the most sacred of all relations outside of the relation between God and man. It is not to be violated even in look and thought. Adultery may be committed even when lust never passes beyond the licentious glance.¹ In the same proportion as the natural sanctity of marriage is injured, in the same proportion is the nature of man outraged and ideal fraternity broken. To dishonor this first of human relationships is to loosen the bonds of society, to lower present social ideals, to do injury to the essential nature of both the man and the woman. It was, therefore, not in the spirit of a purist or a fanatic that Jesus thus put checks upon divorce, but in that of the ethical and social philosopher. Nor — and this is a remarkable thing — is there a trace of the current formal conception that the husband had any property rights in his wife. On the contrary, as will presently appear, Jesus, to a surprising degree, anticipated today's belief in the equality of the sexes. It was this as well as the underlying principles of his ideal society that led him in the face of popular opinion thus to formulate these strict statutes. Modern sentiment, like the legislation and the sentiment of the professional teachers of his day, is opposed to such severity in the morals of matrimony. Marriage is assuming much more the character of a legal status than of a natural union. Its continuance is increasingly believed to be dependent upon the desires of the parties concerned and the decision of the courts. So far as mere legal separation of unequally or ill-matched persons is concerned, the ideal described by Jesus would not antagonize this modern tendency, but the general consent of past and present moral teachers and statesmen agrees with his noble rejection of the admissibility of the scandalous travesties of life's most sacred union, to which nowadays these separations generally lead. We are not now concerned with the practicability of such an ideal; it may be too

¹ Matt. 5:27, 28. Of course the essence of this conception can be stated less rhetorically.

absolute for an imperfect society. But it can at least be suggested that there are yet grounds for hesitation before one admits that the spirit animating this part of the social teaching of Jesus has been materially surpassed by much of today's divorce legislation.¹

III.

1. It is characteristic of the sanity of Jesus that at this point he introduces something in the nature of an exception to this general teaching. Although marriage is thus sacred, and although in it there is one of the nucleus points of the kingdom, yet all men are not to marry. There is something pathetic as well as humorous in the anxiety shown by the disciples over his stern teaching.² It seems to them that if divorce be thus forbidden it were better not to marry at all! Jesus, with characteristic tact, grants them their conclusion, but supplies it with premises of a much loftier standard, and in his treatment of the matter presents one of the fundamental teachings of his entire system, viz., that a good thing must always be sacrificed for a better thing. No man, unless like Origen he be utterly blinded by an ascetic and fanatic fervor, could ever misinterpret the intense words in which Jesus expresses this axiom. They simply form one of those characteristic additions with which he so often modifies a truth otherwise absolutely stated. While marriage is supremely good, yet if for any cause it stand in the way of accepting the blessings of the kingdom of heaven, it is to be avoided. The words are a restatement of the familiar teaching of the sacrificed eye and hand.³ And Jesus himself practiced this teaching.

2. But possibly another exception may be derived from the admission by Jesus that Moses had yielded to the "hardness of

¹ For an opposite view of the teaching of Jesus, see TISSOT, *Le Mariage et le Divorce*, ch. ix., and a careful statement by Carroll D. Wright in CRAFTS, *Practical Christian Sociology*, 446-452. It should not be forgotten that the attempt is being made here simply to discover the exact ideal of Jesus. The question of its practicability and its gradual realization belongs to the discussion of sociological dynamics.

² Matt. 19 : 10.

³ Matt. 5 : 29, 30.

heart" on the part of the Jews,¹ and had allowed divorce on such grounds as might easily be made to permit no small latitude. In the light of this recognition of an adjustment of legislation to a people's capacity, may we not have a modifying clause of the ideal legislation?

The objection is weighty, but, disregarding the advisability of admitting such an accommodation in case of reformatory legislation, as a modification of an actual ideal of family life set forth by Jesus, it is not to be admitted. Jesus is here confessedly setting forth a social ideal for the present age and for the very people he addressed. By his own statements it cannot possibly apply to the perfect society of the age to come, since then divorce like marriage will be a question outgrown. To admit this modification would be to destroy his social ideal of mutual fraternity. It would make him in the same breath with which he declares the indissoluble union of two persons to be the divine plan of creation, also declare that after all such a union is not essential in all cases, but may be replaced by more or less indiscriminate multiplication of partners. Such a contradiction, it must be remembered, does not confront the man who regards marriage as simply a contract which guarantees certain peculiar rights to the two consenting parties. In such a conception law makes and law can unmake the union. But with Jesus marriage is a fact, not a definition. God and nature join; man and law cannot separate. He may be a dreamer. He certainly is not inconsistent.²

3. Two further questions are, however, not answered: (1) Would not this position of Jesus admit divorce in case the marriage were broken in its psychical side, though not on its physical; that is, in case of an utter destruction of conjugal love, although neither husband and wife had otherwise broken marital obligations? (2) Would not the spirit if, indeed, not the letter of Jesus be met in case of a divorce granted for an

¹ Matt. 19:8; Mark 10:5.

² For a brief discussion of these two possible conceptions of marriage see DIKE, "Theory of the Marriage Tie," *Andover Review*, December, 1893.

absolute desertion ; that is, would not Jesus so far favor the position of modern law as to grant that desertion is, if not constructive adultery, at least a real severing of both physical and psychical union ?

So far as the first of these questions is concerned, a moment's thought will convince one that this is precisely the thing Jesus is attacking. Metaphysically, it may be, such a position would be permissible. Practically, it would be free love. And, further, it is necessary to remember that in this social teaching Jesus is not dealing with the possible situations of isolated individuals, but with society as such. He is here subject to the necessities that surround all those who provide for the common good of society. It is not to the point, therefore, to plead a resulting hardship in specific cases. But it is not so easy to answer the second of these two questions categorically. It is evident that desertion might easily be regarded as a redefinition of "adultery," and that it has good reasons for being admitted on the very grounds by which Jesus establishes his general position. In this case, therefore, we have a question of interpretation of legislation, and there will always be opportunity for question. But it nevertheless seems tolerably clear that, except perhaps in extreme cases, such redefinition is at once repugnant and dangerous. Waiving the exceedingly important considerations as to the ease by which such a conception of adultery could be abused, it seems sufficient to say that as a general interpretation this view is to be rejected. It involves conditions too similar to those which Jesus immediately attacked, and it is a too severe strain upon the plain meaning of the term¹ used by Jesus ; it is hinging too many possibilities upon an exceptive clause which is itself omitted by an original source.

But it should again be said that at present we are not so much concerned with the applications of the teaching of Jesus as with the discovery of his conception of the ideal forms of social life. It may very likely yet appear that in an attempt at realizing this ideal, legislators and reformers must, like Moses, concede much to the hardness of men's hearts.

¹ *πορνεία*.

IV.

It follows from this noble conception of marriage that woman is placed by Jesus upon a plane of equality with man. She is neither the creature of his fancy, nor is she in a relation of either real or formal subjection. Here, it is true, Jesus was less out of accord with the tendencies of his time. Throughout the Roman empire there was an appreciable advance in the position of women. Except in the case of the Essenes, among the Jews the wife had always held a relatively high position, and among the Romans this was increasingly true through the neglect of the forms of marriage involving *in manu* relations. But even after this has been said, no person acquainted with Jewish or Roman life of the first century would deny that Jesus gives woman a position essentially different from that accorded her by either philosophy or custom.

While among the Romans the steady emancipation through which woman was passing was winning only the contempt of the professional moralist and the laughter of the writer of comedy; and while in Judea the noble ideal of motherhood was being lowered by the ease by which divorce might be obtained; with Jesus there is neither a recognition of a past subjection of woman, an attempt at her emancipation, nor a lament over the difficulties to be foreseen in the enforcement of his teaching in regard to marriage. He simply treats woman as an equal—equal in the matter of marriage and divorce equal as a companion. More than once is the despicable conceit of some Pharisee or disciple rebuked by his exhibition of unconventional sociability. They might wonder or complain; but none the less he taught and loved. All through the gospel story we find a surprisingly high position accorded women. The life of Jesus was to give something more than protection to women. It made them the companions of men—equally privileged members of the new human brotherhood. It was a virgin who bore the Savior; a woman to whom he, as a child, was subject, and by whom, in all probability, he was trained and educated;¹ to a woman, so far as

¹ Luke 2:52.

we have any record, he gave the first clear proclamation of his Messiahship.¹ His first miracle was wrought because of the faith and at the solicitation of his mother.² A woman, who because of her grateful faith poured over him the costly ointment, is the only person to whom he promised an immortality of remembrance.³ Women ministered to his needs and supplied him the means of support.⁴ Among the last words Jesus spoke upon the cross were those with which he commended Mary to the care of his beloved disciple.⁵ A woman was the first at the tomb,⁶ the first to see the risen Christ,⁷ the first to believe on him, and the first to bear testimony to the resurrection.⁸ And is it altogether without suggestiveness that he should have carried his teaching into the heart of housewifely cares and have lifted women's life above cooking as he lifted men's above money-getting?⁹

The by no means improbable story¹⁰ of his encounter with one unfortunate woman, which so long held a position in our canonical collection is a natural outgrowth of the thought of a generation upon which his infinite tact and delicacy had made a profound impression. And it was but an application of his noble conception of the dignity of womanhood and wifehood when the apostles and early Christians refused to break irregular though real marriages that were found to exist among converts from heathenism at the time of their entrance into the church.¹¹

And throughout the gospel story the same equality is observed. He made them members of his society with no distinctively low position, and within the early church their worth was recognized and their needs supplied as in the case of men. As he says who more than all the New Testament writers

¹ John 4:7 *sq.*

² John 2:4 *sq.*

³ Mark 14:9.

⁴ Luke 8:3.

⁵ John 19:26, 27.

¹⁰ John 7:53-8:11. It is not, perhaps, without significance that *ἀγαπάω* is the word used to describe the attitude of Jesus toward women. Luke 7:47; John 11:5.

¹¹ 1 Cor. 7:10, 11; 1 Tim. 3:2.

⁶ Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:1; John 20:1.

⁷ Matt. 28:9; John 20:11.

⁸ John 20:18.

⁹ Luke 10:38-42.

has appreciated the real significance of the work of Jesus, "In Christ there is neither male nor female."¹

Two objections may be raised to this position : (1) On the one hand it may be urged that he sometimes spoke brusquely to women—even to his mother.² But this objection is trivial and would doubtless never have been raised except for the unusually awkward and harsh expression in our English version. (2) On the other hand, it may be urged with far more force that Jesus never expressly attacked those social customs that force woman into infamy, or those conventionalities that have for centuries made her politically and legally the inferior of man ; in short, that he never poses as the champion of the rights of women. But neither does he expressly attack many other social sins and injustices. Nor—and time has proved this—was it needful that he should. The genus includes the species, and if once men get to incorporating the social principles he has enunciated, special forms of evil will of necessity disappear. To demand that the friend of Mary Magdalene and the eulogist of the heathen mother and the self-sacrificing widow should preach woman suffrage ; or to complain because he whose life was a continuous argument for equality and fraternity among men and women did not revise the Old Testament until it accorded with the Christian conceptions of today, is to ask that which is as absurd as it is impossible and needless.

V.

And what is true of his honoring of woman, is strikingly apparent in his regard for childhood. Jesus himself was a man without home, without wife, without child ; but he has left words which have for all ages sanctified childhood. In his own life, despite the scantiness of the records found in Luke and Matthew, there is presented an ideal of childhood. He rendered filial obedience to his parents and as a "child grew and waxed strong, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him."³ In

¹ Gal. 3 : 28.

³ Luke 2 : 40. Cf. Luke 2 : 52.

² John 2 : 4 ; Matt. 15 : 21-28.

his words over the little children who were forbidden by the disciples to come to him, he has lifted childhood into a type of character, and has given children their share in the kingdom of God.¹ In fact with Jesus the vocabulary of the family becomes one of choicest affection. His disciples are his "little children," doubly dear when he is about to leave them.² All earnest members of his divine brotherhood are his family.³

In the comparisons of Jesus we again see clearly the underlying Christian ideal of the family. Here, as in the case of women, among his words there is no exhortation to either paternal or filial love. The apostle, less filled with a profound confidence in the inmost nature of man and more concerned with halting converts, bids sons obey their parents and fathers not to provoke their children to wrath.⁴ But such commands were impossible for Jesus. With him paternal love is as human and natural as life. To command it would have been to make the holiest of instincts the product of effort. From the very method of his teaching Jesus must needs have started with some absolute ideal to which he might compare spiritual relations, and which, already understood, would make intelligible that which was difficult to understand. Other teachers have felt the same need, and this highest type of holiest relations has been found in many things—numerical harmonies, nature, the state. Jesus found it in the family. Even among evil men the paternal instinct gives good gifts and the deception of a child is unthinkable.⁵ Love and kindness between brothers are spontaneous⁶ and their absence is a type of all that is selfish and ungodlike.⁷ To give up family relations is the supreme test of loyalty.⁸ Thus it is that, as has already appeared is his habit, Jesus here using the noblest forms and words for his noblest teaching, makes the members of the divine society brothers; while paternal love is his representation of the love of God,⁹ and the family as a unit, his

¹ Matt. 19:13-15; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15-17.

² John 13:33; Mark 10:24.

³ Matt. 12:49, 50.

⁴ Eph. 6:1, 4; Col. 3:20, 21.

⁵ Matt. 7:9-11; Luke 11:11-13.

⁶ Matt. 5:47; John 8:42.

⁷ Luke 15:25, 32; *cf.* Matt. 5:22; 10:21.

⁸ Matt. 19:29.

⁹ Luke 15:11 *sq.*

type of that divine society toward which humanity with a Christ within it must move.

It is because of this supreme position of family relations, assigned and presupposed by Jesus, that he has no need to prescribe any minute regulations as to education and the other duties owed to and by children. His own day was full of educational opportunities for boys and girls, both Roman and Jew, but this was not the cause of his omission of this phase of child-life. As in the case of the position of women, his ideal of the family is dynamic. Here, as in so much of his work, the real significance of Jesus lies farthest from that of a mere tabulator of duties. He could afford to leave his ideal society with its details not filled in, because with the ideal he gave also evolutionary forces. Once possessed by the ideal of brotherhood, and once, be it never so feebly, under the influence of these spiritual forces, each generation could be trusted to transform the world in which it lived into a greater or less approximation to the kingdom. In this disregard of the temporary, and in his sublime trust in the salvability of human society and especially in the possibility of recuperation that lies in the health and goodness of social instincts if once they are allowed a normal spiritual environment, Jesus stands infinitely removed from even the best of his followers. They argue where he believes. They legislate where he inspires. The office of each is necessary, for the apostles, like the Christians of subsequent epochs, must needs incarnate the principles of Jesus in the midst of different social forces. They thus form one stage in successive approaches to that new society whose ideal Jesus set before humanity. But he is the architect; they are the craftsmen, the hewers of wood and stone.

VI.

It is at this point that Jesus leaves the family — the first social unit. He has given no specific regulations in regard to the up-bringing of children. He has not concerned himself with those difficult domestic problems with which the apostles were to be so mightily tried. It was enough, apparently, for him to have applied

clearly the supreme social ideals of divine sonship and human fraternity to this first great union of humanity. He has shown that such applications involve above all unity of the family and therefore the sanctity of the marriage tie and the dignity of woman. The carrying of such principles into the details of human relationship, with the accommodation of them to the needs and possibilities of an imperfect society, was left by Jesus especially to his immediate followers. But his words were enough. Through all the difficulties that such accommodation involved they kept fast hold upon the noble parallel of their Master. As with him the new social order was to be a family with God as its father and men as its children, so with them the church was the bride of the Lamb, and every fatherhood and family in heaven and on earth was named of that great Father before whom they daily bowed the knee.

SHAILER MATHEWS.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO.